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Woodland Heights Neighborhood Charter Plan Update

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WOODLAND HEIGHTS



February 2013

Neighborhood Plan



IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Woodland Heights Neighborhood Charter Plan Update

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In cooperation with:

Woodland Heights Organization

and

City of Des Moines

February 18, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s, the City of Des Moines and the Polk County Board of Supervisors developed the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) to help stabilize and improve Des Moines' neighborhoods. As a result, the city's Community Development Department established the Neighborhood Development Division to coordinate the NRP.

The NRP Program uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, the City of Des Moines, Polk County, and local business leaders to develop a public/private partnership that addresses revitalization issues within the city. To participate in the program, recognized neighborhoods are required to submit an application and present to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board. If selected into the program, the neighborhood planning process relies on active resident participation to identify critical neighborhood issues in their area.

In 2011, a pilot program was launched allowing charter neighborhoods to apply. A charter neighborhood is a neighborhood which has already completed and implemented a plan; however, many of these plans are now 15-20 years old. On September 14, 2011, the Woodland Heights Organization filed an application to participate in the pilot Charter Neighborhood Program. Their original neighborhood plan was approved in 1991 and the neighborhood had reached many of their goals. The Woodland Heights Organization's charter application included many new goals that could be implemented in an updated plan.

On January 1, 2012, the City Council of the City of Des Moines approved the recommendation supporting the selection of Woodland Heights as one of the five neighborhoods to participate in the Charter Neighborhood Program. Neighborhoods selected for the pilot program are required to work with city staff as well as graduate students from Iowa State University's Department of Community and Regional Planning (ISU Planning Team) to update their respective neighborhood plans.



Whitmer Estate

National Historic Register

The Woodland Heights Organization (WHO), the neighborhood's representative neighborhood association, began the planning process with a survey of the residents of Woodland Heights. The survey was designed, distributed, and executed by members of WHO. They collected a

INTRODUCTION

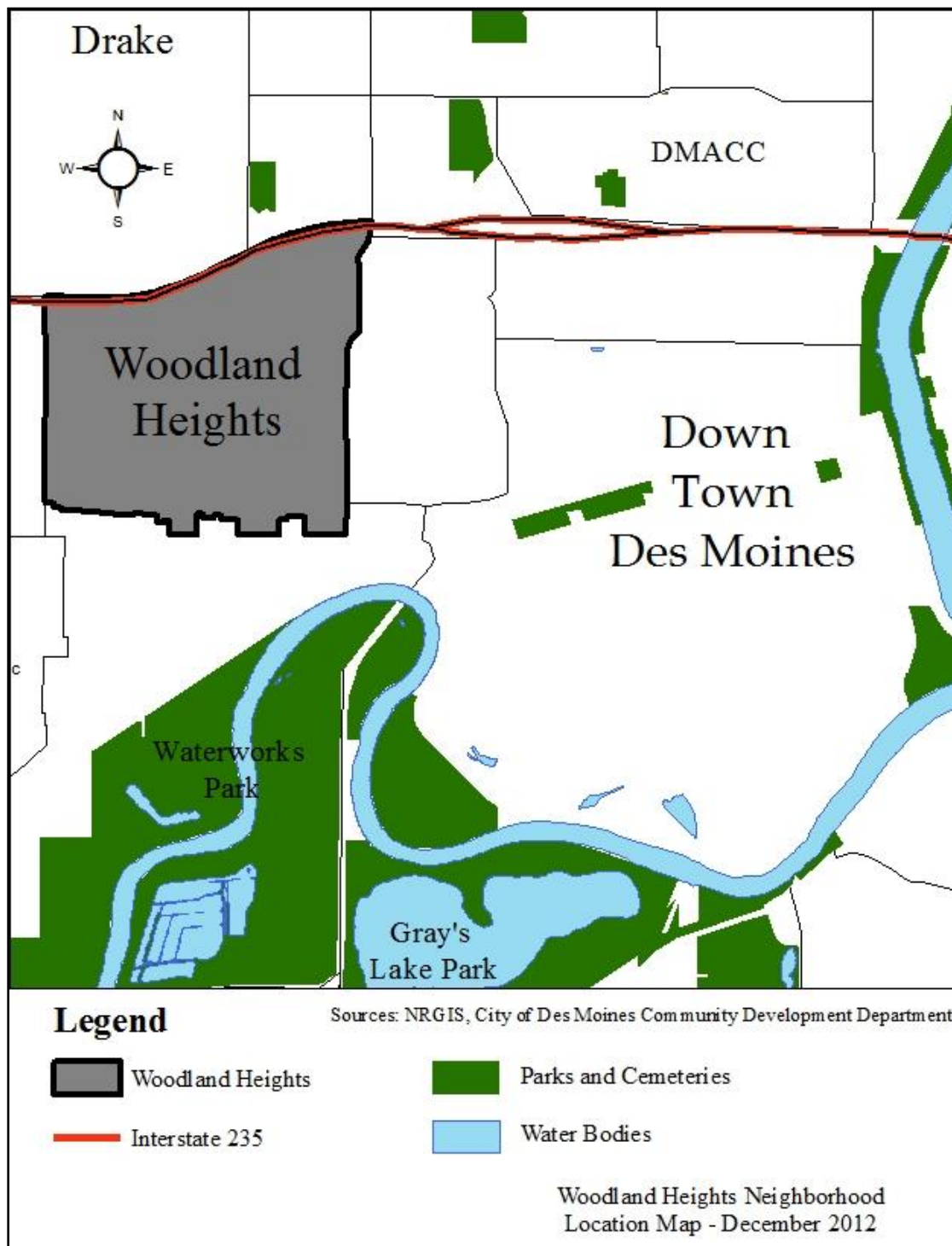
total of 119 surveys, which were then analyzed by the ISU Planning Team. The survey provided a window into the needs of the neighborhood's residents. It revealed that neighborhood residents are pleased with the quality of the life that Woodland Heights offers. For example, most respondents cited a high perception of public safety, a strong sense of community and education opportunities as qualities of the neighborhood. The survey data also indicates that the residents deeply care about the aesthetic quality and historic significance of the neighborhood. The results of this survey are fully presented in Appendix A at the end of this document.



Woodland Heights Planning Workshop

The survey set the foundation for the neighborhood planning process to efficiently move forward as it guided the ISU Planning Team to prepare and plan for three information-seeking workshops. The workshops were designed and facilitated by the ISU Planning Team. Each workshop was three full hours, and allowed neighborhood residents to be intimately involved in the planning process. The first workshop, held on September 22nd, focused upon identifying resident goals, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the neighborhood, as well as the creation of a neighborhood vision statement. Participants in the following two workshops, held on October 6th and 20th, respectively, identified goals and strategies that would help the neighborhood address the concerns of each of the priority areas, determined as a result of the survey results. These priority areas are discussed further on page nine of this plan.

WOODLAND HEIGHTS LOCATION



HISTORY

Centrally located in Des Moines, the Woodland Heights neighborhood was established in the early 1900s. Until the late 1880s, Woodland Heights was simply referred to as Woodlands, owing to its natural beauty as a forested, semi-rural area. The unique history of the neighborhood is addressed in the City of Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan, which states that traditional neighborhoods are worth protecting and efforts to protect community character are central to remaining a viable community.

The largest section of the neighborhood was once known as Woodland Place, which is roughly bordered today by Woodland Avenue and Center Street, and 25th and 28th streets. It was named Woodland Place by Percival-Porter Company, who developed the land and subdivided it into 138 lots in 1907. These plots sold for \$300-\$600 and created the foundation for the rapid development and transformation of Woodland Heights into a more urban setting.

Other distinctions add to the neighborhood's historic character. The housing stock primarily consists of Craftsman and Prairie homes, and features unique American Four Square architectural-styled homes. Today, these highly valued historic homes are a defining element of Woodland Heights' architectural landscape.



Early 1900s Arts and Crafts Home



National Historic Register Prairie-Style Home

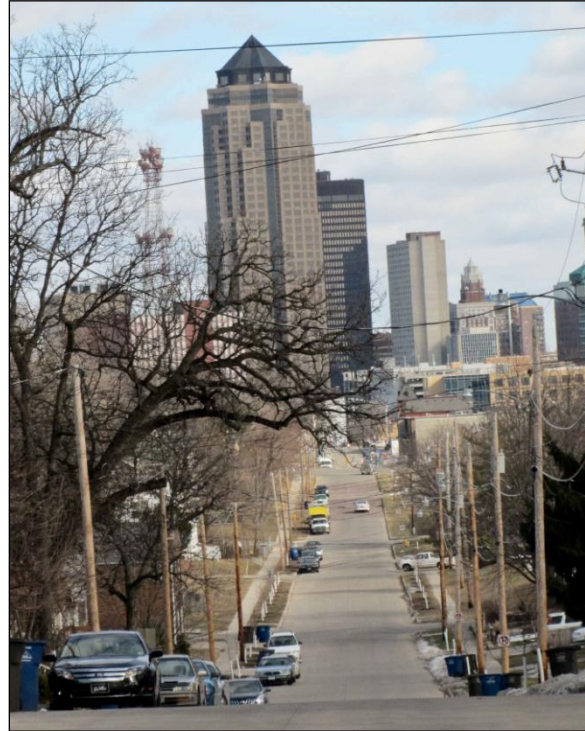


Victorian-Style Home

DEMOGRAPHICS

Located west of downtown, Woodland Heights serves as a gateway to Des Moines. The neighborhood is bounded on the north by I-235, on the south by Ingersoll Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to the east, and 31st Street to the west. The neighborhood covers an area of 283 acres. The primary land use classification is residential (87.2%) with some commercial (12.8%).

According to 2010 census tract-level data, the population of the Woodland Heights neighborhood is estimated to be 1,704 people. This constitutes just 0.8% of the city of Des Moines' estimated 2010 population of 209,665. This is a neighborhood of seniors and young families; a diverse community where neighbors help neighbors.



Race and Ethnicity

The neighborhood's central location contributes to its diversity, one of the neighborhood's most highly valued assets. According to the 2010 census data (Figure 1), Woodland Heights has a more diverse racial makeup than the city as a whole. As one neighborhood resident explained, "[The neighborhood's] diversity of cultures is good for raising kids."

Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity

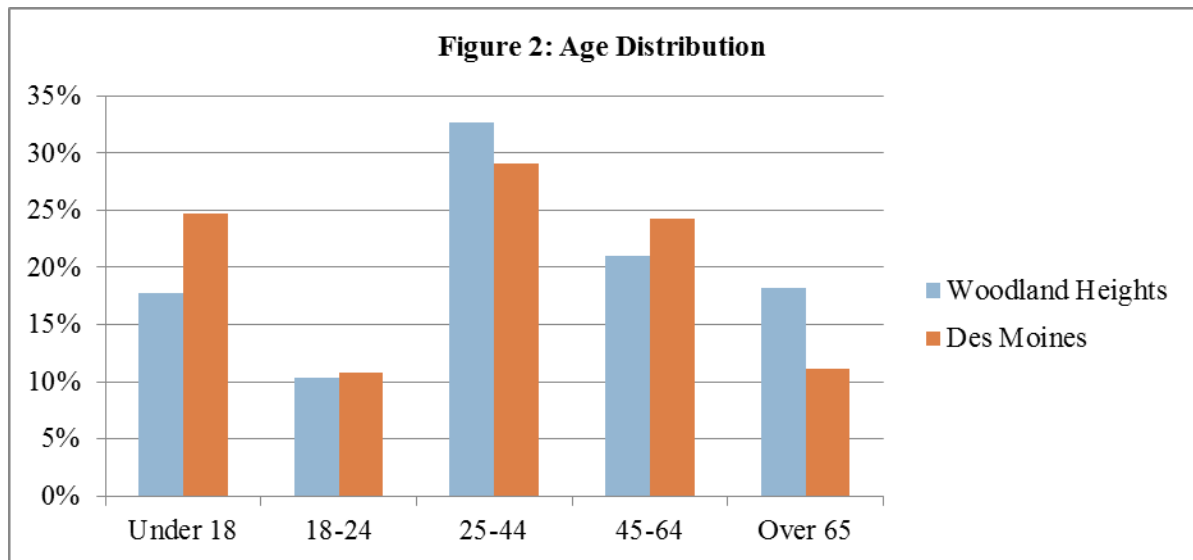
| Race/Ethnicity | Woodland Heights | City of Des Moines |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| White | 67.5 % | 76.9 % |
| Non-white | 32.5 % | 23.1 % |
| Black | 22.6 % | 10 % |
| Asian | 3.3 % | 4.3 % |
| Hispanic (any race) | 6.6% | 11.7 % |

Data from US Census, 2010

DEMOGRAPHICS

Sex and Age Distribution

The 2010 census indicates that Woodland Heights is 50.7% male and 49.3% female. This distribution is very similar to that of Des Moines as a whole (51.1% and 48.9%, respectively).



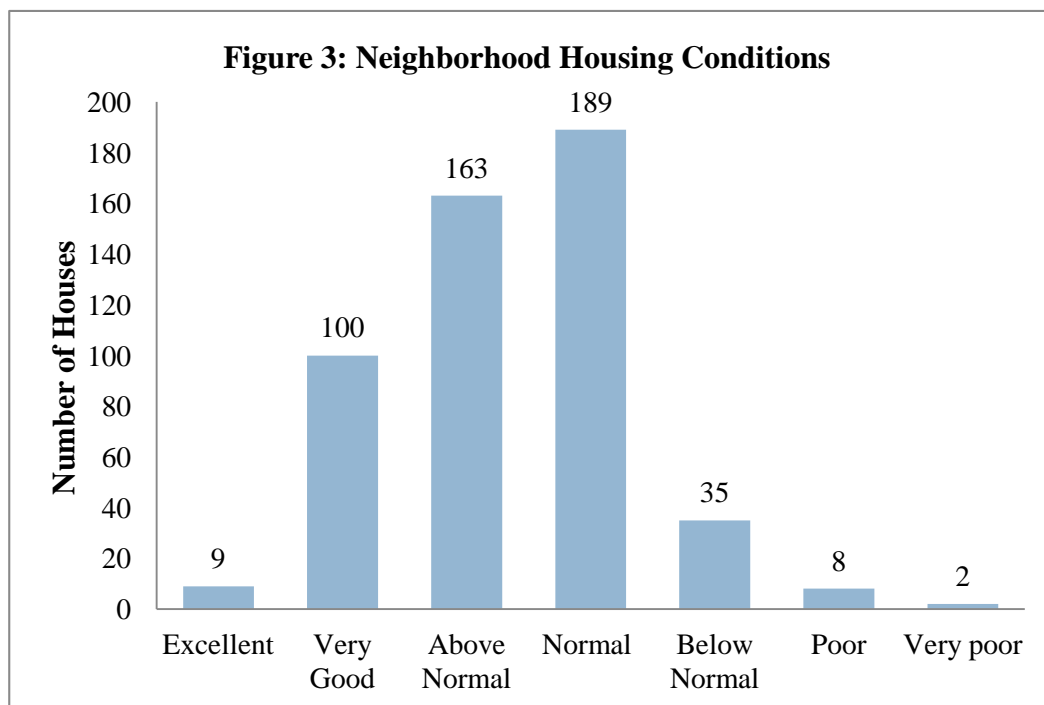
Data from US Census, 2010

Another area where Woodland Heights is distinct is in its age distribution. Figure 2 shows that Woodland Heights has a higher proportion of 25 to 44 year-olds when compared to the rest of Des Moines. This implies that the neighborhood is attractive to those within this age group. As a result, an opportunity exists to continue to attract young professionals to Woodland Heights. The neighborhood also has a higher than average elderly population, which creates a level of stability within the neighborhood residents as people age in place. It also reflects the presence of senior living opportunities located within the neighborhood. Additionally, the age distribution of the neighborhood indicates the need to provide for the diverse immediate and future living and service needs of all age groups.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Woodland Heights is primarily a residential area with 973 households. There are 538 apartment units in the neighborhood, compared to 474 single family homes. The housing stock is as diverse as its residents, with the majority of single family homes and townhouses including two to three bedrooms and one to two bathrooms.

The number of bedrooms and bathrooms of the existing housing stock is representative of the age of the existing homes. The neighborhood's housing stock is older than the city's as a whole, with the average house in Woodland Heights being built in 1922, compared to 1945 for Des Moines. Just 8.9% of the housing stock is classified as below normal, poor, or very poor. The average assessed value per square foot is \$78, below the citywide average of \$95 per square foot.



The City of Des Moines rates the physical condition of homes according to the following scale: excellent (e), very good (vg), above normal (an), normal (n), below normal (bn), poor (p), and very poor (vp). The percentage of houses in the Woodland Heights neighborhood that rate as excellent (e), very good (vg), above normal (an) and normal (n) condition are very similar to the City of Des Moines as a whole. The percentages are 91.1 and 92.8 respectively. Figure 3 indicates the current housing conditions in the neighborhood.

PRIORITY AREAS AND VISION STATEMENT

The first of the three neighborhood workshops was a visioning session. Woodland Heights' residents, facilitated by the ISU planning team, identified the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Drawing from this exercise as well as the neighborhood survey, we were able to identify five priority areas: community identity and enhancement, trees, recreation and open spaces, housing, and infrastructure (Figure 4). These priority areas represent the major issues that Woodland Heights' neighborhood residents seek to improve and build upon during the next five to ten years.

Figure 4: Woodland Heights Priority Areas



The Woodland Heights vision statement, crafted by the neighborhood residents with facilitation from the ISU Planning Team, reads:

The residents of Woodland Heights envision a cohesive, aesthetically pleasing, and peaceful neighborhood where families can thrive in a socially diverse, historically significant community that remains connected to its natural setting and surrounding urban environment.

The vision statement was influenced by the neighborhood survey as well as the first two community workshops. This vision statement guided the development of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND ENHANCEMENT

Woodland Heights is a diverse neighborhood that boasts an active neighborhood organization and longtime residents. The friendliness of the residents was often cited in neighborhood survey results when respondents were asked about their perceptions of Woodland Heights.

Workshop participants and survey respondents also cherish Woodland Heights' rich, historical housing stock, which is often surrounded by mature, beautiful trees. Residents also value the diversity of people and cultures and the close proximity to Ingersoll Avenue that makes the neighborhood a vibrant community. However, residents note that a strong sense of community identity is lacking. Residents mentioned a lack of overall knowledge of the neighborhood's historic qualities, a lack of resident interaction between one another and little opportunity to become more involved in neighborhood decision-making. They also identified an improved perception of safety following the neighborhood's participation in the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) program which replaced the Neighborhood Watch Program. The NBSD's mission is to revitalize and stabilize Des Moines' neighborhoods by creating a city-citizen partnership to identify and resolve safety issues at the neighborhood level.

The neighborhood planning process enabled residents to create goals that will increase the sense of resident awareness and participation, as well as creating a greater sense of community identity. These goals include the promotion of a stronger neighborhood identity and the creation of more opportunities for community interaction and outreach. Each of these goals, and related strategies, further enhance the City of Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan, where traditional neighborhoods (such as Woodland Heights) develop a "sense of place," or identity.



Woodland Heights planning workshop



Final presentation of neighborhood plan

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND ENHANCEMENT

Neighborhood residents often referred to Ingersoll Avenue with a great sense of pride. Ingersoll forms the southern boundary of Woodland Heights (the neighborhood claims both sides of the avenue). It is the commercial backbone of the neighborhood and provides quality access to public transit that the neighborhood values. Due to the importance of Ingersoll Avenue as a corridor within the city of Des Moines, in June 2012, the Ingersoll and Grand Avenue Planning Committee prepared the *Ingersoll and Grand Avenue Revitalization Strategy*. This Strategy identifies ways in which Ingersoll Avenue may continue to become a major commercial corridor within the city. Some of the recommendations identified within the Revitalization Strategy include increasing infill development and public art.

WHO currently has an official representative that attends Ingersoll Business Committee meetings, and neighborhood residents hope to take grater steps to increase the communication between WHO and the Ingersoll Business Committee in the future. Neighborhood residents also note the need to increase resident awareness of existing businesses along Ingersoll Avenue. Neighborhood residents believe that the community events they hold every year, such as *Neighborhood Night Out*, will also bring residents and Ingersoll business owners together on an informal basis.



Rebuilding Together Garden Project



Neighborhood Night Out gathering

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND ENHANCEMENT

| Goal | Strategy | Implementation | Responsible Parties | Priority; timeline |
|--|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| Enhance the visibility and marketability of Woodland Heights | Develop signage for neighborhood points of entry | Coordinate with City's Traffic and Transportation Division to create signs, identify points in neighborhood where signs are needed, and have signs posted | WHO; City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division | Medium; mid-term |
| | Initiate a neighborhood branding effort | Develop a neighborhood logo to be used on signs and all neighborhood-related communication | WHO | High; short-term |
| | | Develop a brochure for real estate agents that highlights neighborhood history and assets | WHO | Low; mid-term |
| Increase communication and outreach within the neighborhood | Provide outreach to new neighbors | Develop welcome packet for new residents | WHO; Rebuilding Together; Des Moines Neighbors | Medium; short-term |
| | Strengthen the Woodland Heights Organization | Develop WHO website and newsletter | WHO | High; ongoing |
| | | Increase WHO volunteer base | WHO | High; ongoing |
| Improve connections between the neighborhood and businesses along Ingersoll Avenue | Increase neighborhood resident awareness of Ingersoll businesses | Identify ways that Woodland Heights residents will support local Ingersoll business | WHO | High; on-going |

TREES

Woodland Heights is an established neighborhood with a large old-growth urban forest. Besides being surrounded by mature trees, the houses are nestled in a landscape of rolling hills. This scenery is repeated throughout the neighborhood and creates a close connection to nature giving residents a quiet retreat from the busy urban landscape, while having all the amenities of a bustling city nearby. This natural landscape has become an essential part of the character and identity of Woodland Heights.



Tree planting project



Tree-lined street

In the community survey and planning workshops, many of the residents of Woodland Heights cited the importance of preserving and maintaining the urban forest on private and public land. The City of Des Moines also includes trees as an integral part of all street improvements. A primary concern raised by neighborhood residents is the difficulty of maintaining and removing trees on private land. Besides the costs of tree maintenance, concerns also include a lack of knowledge of tree health, diseases, maintenance and invasive species.

TREES

| Goal | Strategy | Implementation | Responsible Parties | Priority; timeline |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Preserve and expand Woodland Heights' tree population | Encourage property owners to preserve existing trees through appropriate maintenance routines | Organize an annual tree care day with speakers, information and referral from IDNR, ISU, Polk County, City of Des Moines | WHO | High; ongoing |
| | | Promote the increased neighborhood participation in the City of Des Moines' Champion Tree program | WHO | Low; ongoing |
| | | Promote education through the Tree Steward training program of the ISU Forestry department | WHO; Tree Steward program | Medium; mid-term |
| | Encourage property owners to plant new trees | Identify resources for high quality/low cost trees for interested homeowners | WHO; MidAmerican Energy; Trees Forever | High; ongoing |
| | Prevent tree loss on public right-of-ways | Coordinate with city to replant trees on right-of-way along High Street | City of Des Moines Forestry Division; WHO | High; mid-term |
| | | Coordinate with city to establish priority replacement when additional trees are lost on city-owned property in neighborhood | WHO; City of Des Moines Forestry Division | Medium; ongoing |



Flowering tree canopy

HOUSING

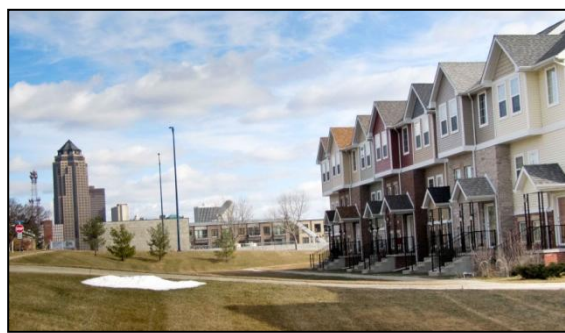
Housing is a major component of every neighborhood plan, particularly in a traditional neighborhood such as Woodland Heights, which holds the potential for the revitalization of an aging housing stock. The historical homes are a unique characteristic of Woodland Heights that sets it apart from suburban development. Many of the neighborhood's homes are bungalows and are known for their affordability and efficient character. Yet Woodland Heights also has several duplexes and commercial apartment buildings, including the Scottish Rite that provides both rental units and housing for the elderly. In addition, there is one new infill development along High Street with seventeen townhouses.

A small group of residents has always been active in the preservation and promotion of the historic and architectural character of the neighborhood. This effort resulted in a Woodland Heights character plan that outlines the architectural guidelines that fit with the historical qualities of the neighborhood. These guidelines are intended for houses, as well as outbuildings such as garages. In addition, in Chapter Two of the City of Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan, it is stated that garages should be placed on a lot consistent with the predominant character of the neighborhood. The awareness and diffusion of the neighborhood's character plan needs to be strengthened with future the possibility of redevelopment and new infill construction. This requires collaboration between the City of Des Moines and the neighborhood. Development that promotes home ownership opportunities needs to be prioritized on these lots.

The housing conditions have improved immensely since the last neighborhood plan in 1991. This has been done by funds from private land owners as well as financial support through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC). In 2008, Rebuilding Together helped weatherize 107 homes in Woodland Heights



Restored home



New condos and downtown view

HOUSING

| Goal | Strategies | Implementation | Responsible Parties | Priority; timeline |
|---|--|--|---|--------------------|
| Preserve the distinct character of the neighborhood | Promote Woodland Heights' historical architecture | Include character plan information in welcome packet for new residents | WHO | High; short-term |
| | Distribute the character plan to the Plan and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment | The City of Des Moines Neighborhood Planning Department will distribute the WHO character plan to the Plan and Zoning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment | City of Des Moines Neighborhood Planning Department | High; short-term |
| Address abandoned and vacant properties | Prevent vacancies and abandonment of properties | Promote the Iowa Mortgage Helpline in the WHO blog and other available venues | WHO; City of Des Moines | Low; short-term |
| | | Create a neighborhood strategy to maintain vacant and abandoned property | WHO; City of Des Moines | High; long-term |
| Promote the renovation and maintenance of existing properties | Promote funding opportunities for home repair for low income households | Promote and distribute potential funding opportunities through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) in WHO blog, list serve and other methods of communication | WHO; NFC; City of Des Moines | Low; mid-term |

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The central location of the Woodland Heights neighborhood makes it an ideal for location for recreation as well as for living. The neighborhood also has walkable streets with large shade trees, bike lanes, and easy access to shops and restaurants. Although the neighborhood is connected to bike paths leading to recreational opportunities such as Gray's Lake that are outside of the neighborhood, these connections are not well known. Residents also identified improved access to Water Works Park and Gray's Lake as a priority and would like to see these connections improved and better marked.



Access to downtown and recreational opportunities

In terms of open space, the neighborhood has Chamberlain Park—a tremendous resource used by people from Woodland Heights as well as other neighborhoods. Preserving and improving Chamberlain Park for current and future generations to enjoy and utilize is a high priority for the residents of the neighborhood, especially for the Woodland Heights Organization. It also has the Woodland Cemetery and three public schools which offer additional open space as well as recreational opportunities. Neighborhood residents also like to call attention to the public spaces within the neighborhood that could be a future source of recreation. These open spaces include alleyways and street corridors that may be used as recreation spaces if traffic is restricted on certain times and certain days (such as Sundays).

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Chamberlain Park

Chamberlain Park is located on the corner of Woodland Avenue and 22nd Street, near Martin Luther King Parkway. Amenities at Chamberlain Park include playground equipment, grills, picnic tables and an open air picnic shelter. Chamberlain Park itself is flat and relatively small at 1.12 acres. A common discussion regarding the park involves parking. Chamberlain Park does not offer a parking lot, and parking is only offered on the north side of Woodland Avenue. The neighborhood, however, would like to see Chamberlain Park utilized as more of a community-gathering place. Residents would like to see more programming and events occurring at Chamberlain Park, such as yoga and outdoor movies. The residents of Woodland Heights would like to see Chamberlain Park become recognizable as the community jewel that it is through ongoing beautification efforts. This could include the addition of flowers, additional seating, paved parking, and other amenities.



Unpaved parking area



Chamberlain Park playground equipment

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Woodland Cemetery

Although there is only one city-owned park space in Woodland Heights, neighborhood residents often referred to other open spaces throughout the neighborhood as areas of recreation. One space is Woodland Cemetery. This cemetery sits on the corner of Woodland Avenue and MLK Parkway and encompasses nearly forty acres of land. Although no ordinance currently allows for recreating within the cemetery, residents often discussed walking and running through the cemetery. Neighborhood residents expressed a strong desire to increase access to the cemetery.



Woodland Cemetery

Other Recreational Opportunities

Finally, the neighborhood is home to three different public schools: Callanan Middle School, Ruby Van Meter, and Smouse Opportunity School. These three schools are grouped in close proximity to one another and the campus includes outdoor recreational fields and basketball courts. The Community Education division of the Des Moines Independent School District regularly schedules evening and weekend classes at these locations that are available to the general public. Classes range from infant or arthritis swim classes to crocheting to pickup basketball and zumba. More information about this program can be found at the Community Education website: <https://commed.dmps.k12.ia.us/wconnect/ace/Home.htm>

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

| Goal | Strategy | Implementation | Responsible Parties | Priority; timeline |
|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| Improve and expand recreational opportunities within Woodland Heights | Increase existing capacity of Chamberlain Park | Replace playground equipment and add additional seating | WHO; City of Des Moines Parks and Rec. Dept. | High; mid-term |
| | Explore the possibility of creating paved parking for Chamberlain Park in the alley to the south of the park | Facilitate a neighborhood meeting with the appropriate City of Des Moines Department to discuss the paving and enlargement of the alley | WHO; City of Des Moines Parks and Rec. Dept. | High; mid-term |
| | Increase access to existing recreation spaces | Expand public access to Woodland Cemetery | WHO; Des Moines Parks and Rec. Dept. | Medium; mid-term |
| | | Identify unused public spaces or right of ways that could be used for recreation purposes | WHO; Des Moines Dept. of Parks and Rec. | Low; long-term |
| Improve and expand access to recreational opportunities within Greater Des Moines | WHO and the City of Des Moines will work together to improve awareness and signage of neighborhood routes leading to recreational spaces surrounding Woodland Heights | Create an outreach program that identifies existing and planned area trails, according to the City of DSM Bicycle and Trail Master Plan | Des Moines Dept. of Parks and Recreation; WHO and surrounding neighborhood associations | Medium; short-term |

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is an important issue for the residents of Woodland Heights. In the community survey and planning workshops, many of the residents of Woodland Heights praised their community's close proximity to transit and access to major transportation corridors that serve the entire region. They are proud of the walkability of their neighborhood and work to keep the streets safe and calm. They are also proud of the remarkable improvements in the neighborhood's infrastructure than have occurred since the approval and implementation of the first Woodland Heights neighborhood plan in 1991. Notable among these achievements is the creation of Chamberlain Park, the paving of Rollins Avenue and Pleasant Street, and the installation of new storm and sanitary sewers, curb, street and sidewalks along High and 31st Streets.

However, even with these improvements, infrastructure issues continue to be a major concern among neighborhood residents. Figure 5 provides a comprehensive list of specific infrastructure projects identified by the neighborhood for implementation by the city.

Figure 5: Infrastructure projects

| Infrastructure area | Participants comments/specifics |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Sidewalks | Need new sidewalk on the south side of Pleasant St., from 26th St. to 28th St. |
| Curb Cuts | Need new sidewalk on west side of 28th St. between Center and Woodland |
| Walls | Needed between Olive St. and sidewalk along Cottage Grove |
| Streets | Repair wall along Linden St., behind gas station |
| Signage | Repair cemetery wall and install new fence along Woodland Ave. and 24th St. |
| | 22nd St. north of cemetery needs repair |
| | Add stop signs on Woodland Ave and High St to establish Right of Way |
| | Add 4-Way Stop at 29th and High Street |
| | No-outlet sign on Olive is covered by a tree |
| | Add parking signage on Rollins Ave. |
| | Add parking signage on 25th St. |
| | Add parking signage on Woodland between MLK Blvd. and 24th St. |
| | Add parking signage on 24th street north of Center |
| Streetlights and Walk Signals | Walk signal on Woodland Ave. is too short of time to cross |
| | Lighting needs to improve at I-235 and 31st St. intersection |
| | Streetlights needed on 28th, Pleasant and Center |
| Landscaping/Trees | 28th Street, Woodland Avenue and MLK in need of trees |
| | Replant trees along High St. between MLK and 31st |
| Fence | Install DOT fence on the south side of the Cottage Grove between the Cottage Grove St. exit and Olive Ave. extending to create a continual fence; Plant evergreens on the housing side of the fence |

INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure improvement goals for Woodland Heights begin with the specific repair and maintenance projects mentioned above. While identifying these projects, residents expressed a desire to see aesthetic improvements to Woodland Avenue and 28th Street, repair of the wall along Linden Street, and repairs to the cemetery wall along Woodland Avenue that compliment the historic quality of Woodland Cemetery. However, they also identified other projects that will help increase mobility and safety in the neighborhood. Residents want to see all sidewalks that lead to the neighborhood's three schools completed and improved traffic safety in the neighborhood. Many residents would like to see bus access improve further, including the implementation of bus rapid transit along Ingersoll.

Chapter Two of the City of Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan addresses some of the neighborhood's concerns with infrastructure. In the plan, the city encourages neighborhoods to define their neighborhood identity and form. To improve infrastructure and transportation, the Woodland Heights Organization must work closely with the City of Des Moines to implement the goals stated in the Character Plan.

| Goal | Strategy | Implementation | Responsible Parties | Priority; timeline |
|--|---|---|--|--------------------|
| Complete sidewalk network along school walk routes | Install new sidewalk along south side of Pleasant St, between 26th & 28th streets | City staff will review and determine eligibility as a High Priority Sidewalk WHO will submit a request to City Council WHO will gauge property owner support for sidewalk installation and coordinate gathering petition signatures | WHO, City of Des Moines Engineering Dept | High; short-term |
| Maintain and repair neighborhood infrastructure | Replace the west-side and south side wall of the Woodland Cemetery | Coordination with the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Department for design and installation of new fence | WHO; City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development; City of Des Moines Engineering Dept. | High; mid-term |

INFRASTRUCTURE

| Goal | Strategy | Implementation | Responsible parties | Priority; timeline |
|--|--|---|--|--------------------|
| | Increase number of curb cuts at neighborhood intersections | Installation of curb-cuts at missing intersections | DSM Dept. of Public Works; Dept. of Parks and Rec.; WHO | Medium; mid-term |
| | Encourage sidewalk maintenance | Dissemination of information regarding City of Des Moines Special Assessment Subsidy Program | WHO | Medium; mid-term |
| | | WHO coordinates the gathering of petitions for new sidewalks where appropriate | WHO | Medium; mid-term |
| Improve traffic safety in Woodland Heights | Traffic calming | Coordination with city's NBSD officer to identify appropriate traffic calming measures | WHO; City of Des Moines Engineering Department | Low; long-term |
| | Parking enforcement | WHO works with Traffic and Transportation Division and their NBSD officer to address parking issues in neighborhood | WHO; City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation NBSD officer | High; short-term |
| | | Create a relationship between neighborhood schools and police for improved parking enforcement during school drop-off and pick-up | WHO; City of Des Moines Police Department; Des Moines Public Schools | High; short-term |
| | | Collaboration with neighborhood schools to educate parents on the need to comply with traffic regulations and safety measures | WHO; Smouse Opportunity School; Callanan Middle School; Ruby Van Meter | Medium; long-term |

IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of this plan is critical to the realization of the neighborhood's vision statement and revitalization. Reaching this vision requires a commitment from neighborhood residents, as well as a strong and active neighborhood leadership. The Woodland Heights Organization will be responsible for the overall implementation of the plan. Therefore, WHO needs to develop a strong organizational capacity that effectively communicates with residents and stakeholders, and collaborates with the partners identified in this plan. It is important that WHO regularly recruits and trains volunteers and develops leadership capacity to facilitate the execution of the plan.

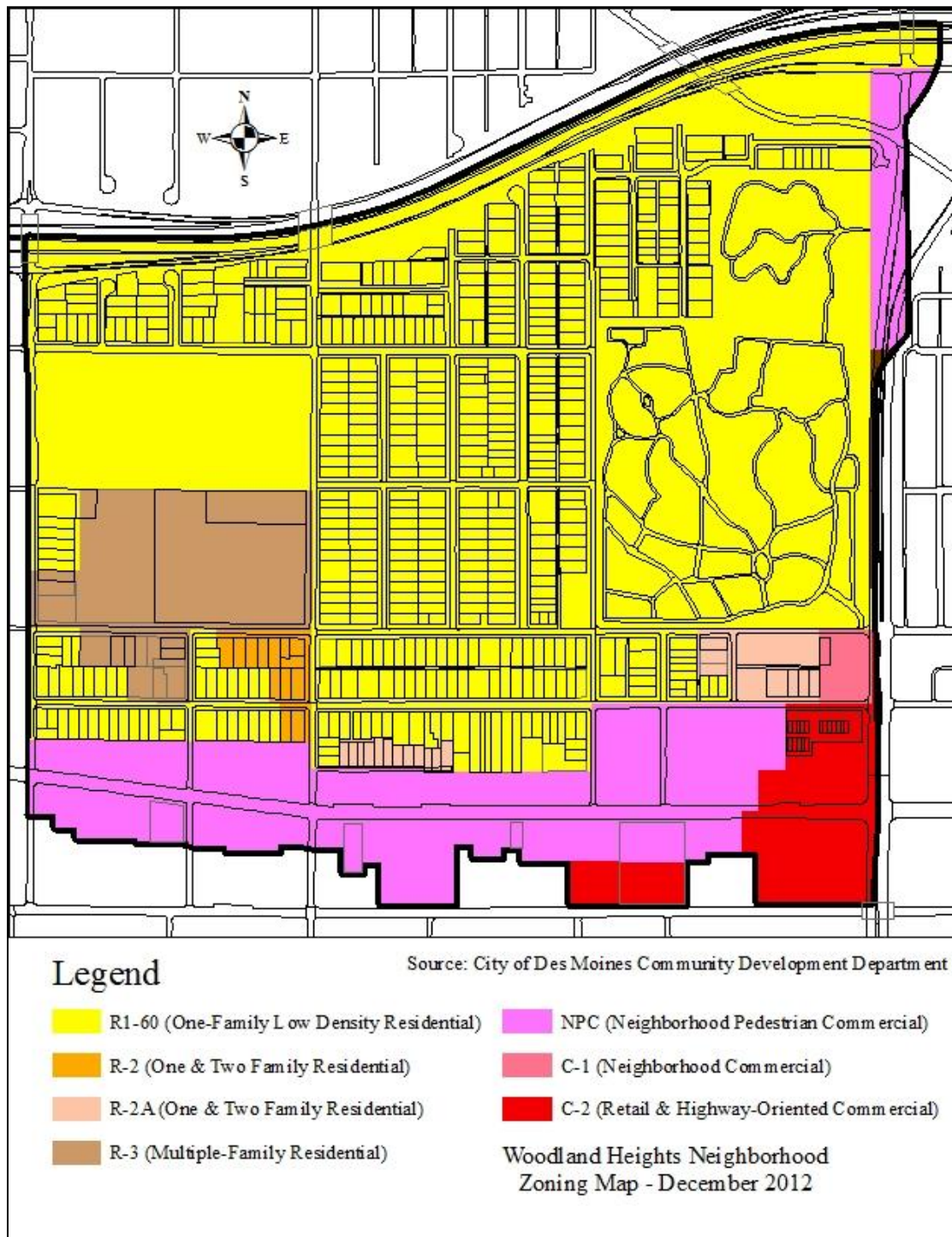
For the plan to be successfully implemented, WHO must create a sustained partnership with the City of Des Moines. The Neighborhood Development Division and other city divisions will provide technical assistance to the neighborhood organization throughout the implementation of the plan. Furthermore, the neighborhood must engage and seek resource support from local organizations, neighborhood businesses and neighborhood schools. This will include identifying financing mechanisms above and beyond the traditional resources.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is not intended to be a permanent commitment of resources to a specific neighborhood. The goal is to solve specific problems that require intensive work and return the neighborhood to a market-based, self-sustaining area. Due to the diversity and complexity of issues identified in the plan, it will be important to place priority on projects that have a catalyzing effect and encourage further revitalization. It is acknowledged that in order to see results, the City of Des Moines and the Neighborhood Organization must commit to a long-term partnership.

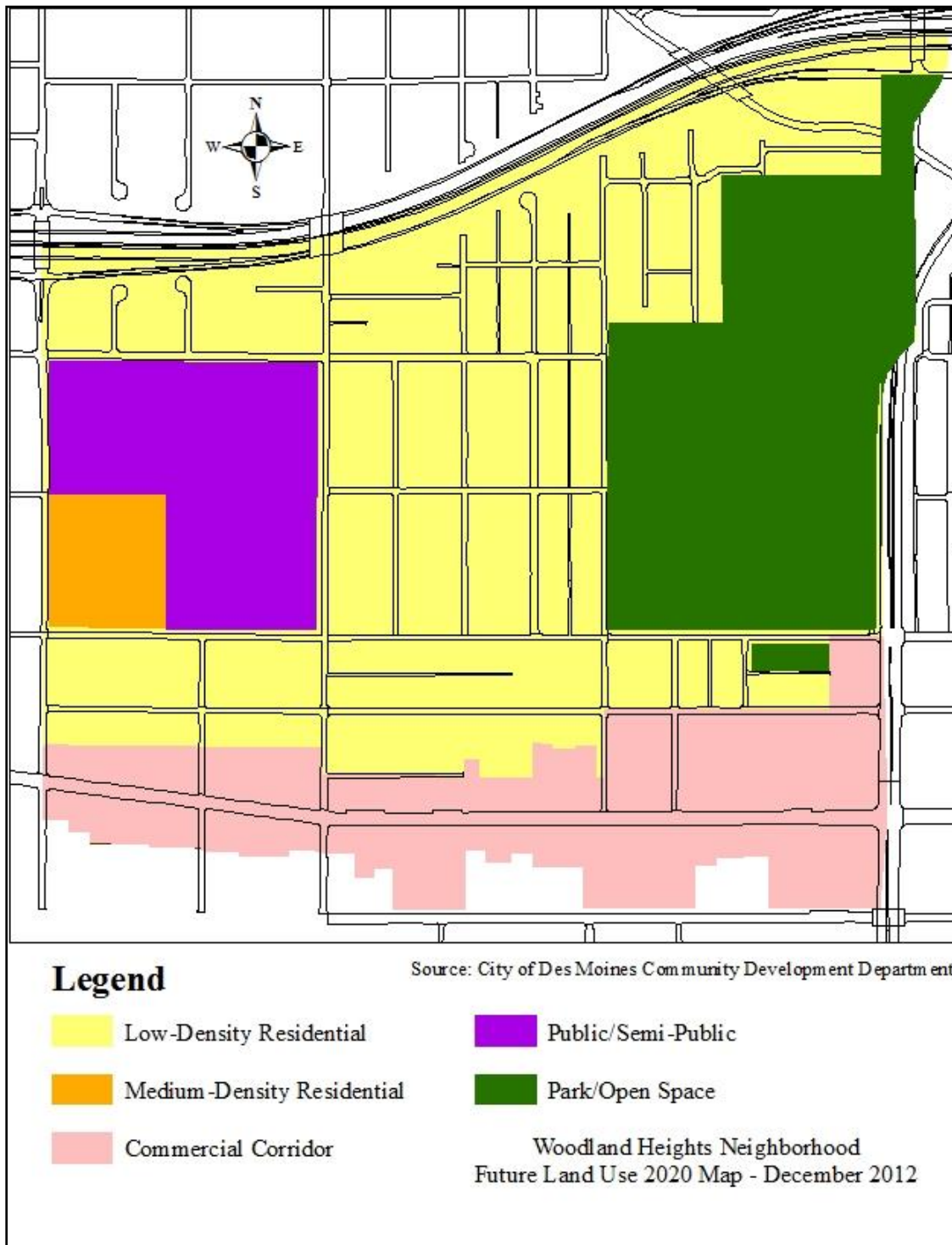
The Neighborhood Development Division will conduct periodic assessments of the progress of the plan and will recommend that the program be ended once significant progress has been made. It is possible that certain activities may be investigated and found not to be feasible or require an unreasonable demand of resources. Once a plan has been found to be complete, a report is prepared with input from the neighborhood organization and forwarded to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board for a recommendation. Their recommendation will then be forwarded to the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors for final approval. At this point the neighborhood becomes a Charter Neighborhood and is phased out of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Additional implementation resources for of priority area projects are listed in Appendix B.

ZONING MAP



2020 LAND USE MAP



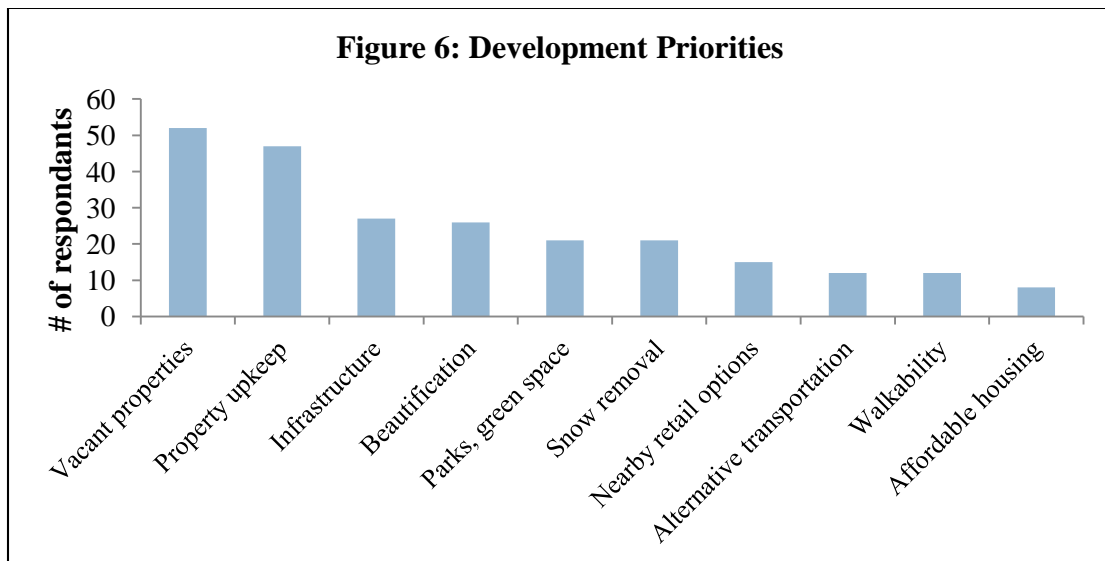
APPENDIX A

2012 Woodland Heights Organization Neighborhood Survey Results September 28, 2012

The following is a summary of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood survey data that was collected over the summer of 2012. Surveys were distributed by members of the Woodland Heights Organization (WHO), the representative neighborhood organization. In total, 119 surveys were collected and analyzed, with the results being incorporated into the 2012 Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan

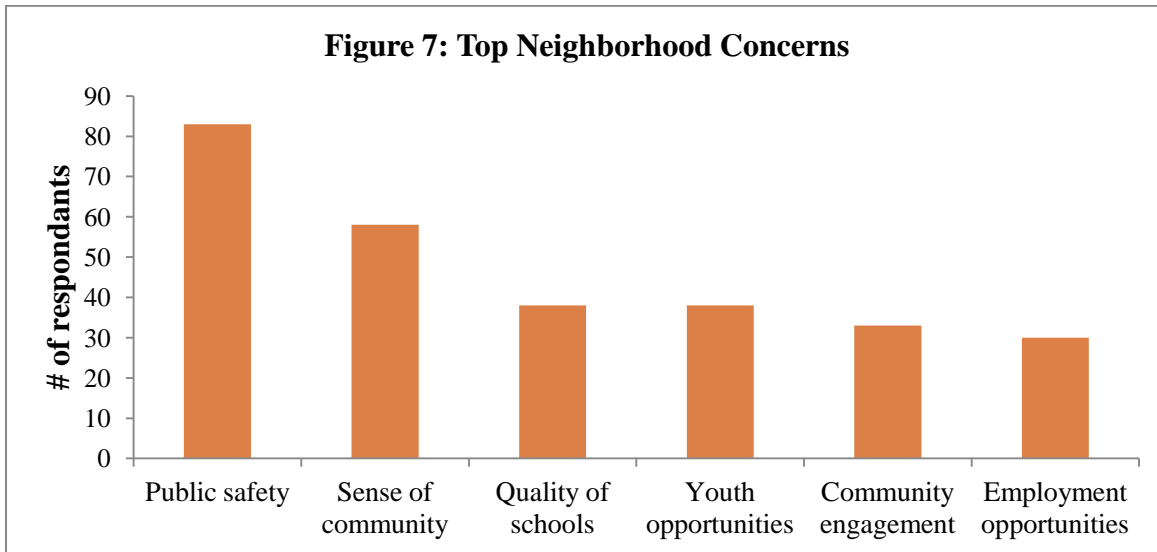
In conducting this neighborhood survey, WHO was able to gain a better understanding of the needs of the neighborhood's residents. These survey results demonstrate that residents are pleased with the quality of the life that Woodland Heights offers. For example, most respondents cited public safety, a strong sense of community and good education opportunities as qualities of the neighborhoods. It is also clear that the residents care deeply about the aesthetic quality and historic significance of the neighborhood. The results of this survey have laid a foundation for the neighborhood planning process to efficiently move forward.

The first question on the survey asked respondents to rank their top three development priority areas for Woodland Heights. Residents clearly chose vacant properties and property upkeep as their top two priorities (Figure 6):



APPENDIX A

The next question asked residents to rank their top three concerns or priorities regarding future neighborhood improvements (Figure 7):



The next three questions asked residents to identify a three strengths, weaknesses and issues that need to be changed in the future of Woodland Heights. Some strengths of the neighborhood that respondents highlight include the peacefulness of the area, the historic neighborhood character of Woodland Heights, and the neighborhood’s proximity to other areas of the Des Moines Metro, including downtown and Gray’s Lake. These strengths are all well-acknowledged among neighborhood residents, and represent a foundation in which to build upon.

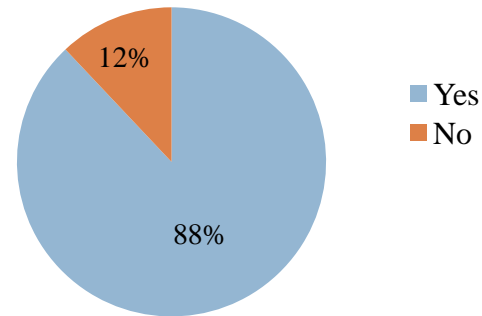
Some weaknesses highlighted by respondents include the poor upkeep, or maintenance, of some of the older homes and yards of the neighborhood, the amount of vacant houses, and the upkeep of the neighborhood’s sidewalks. These weaknesses support the above survey results demonstrating that residents hope to have a cleaner and safer neighborhood in the future.

Finally, three of the primary issues that need to be changed in the future that respondents noted are: a greater sense of community/neighborhood cohesion, improve the quality of the sidewalks and streets of Woodland Heights, and enhance the aesthetics, or image, of the neighborhood.

APPENDIX A

Overwhelmingly, neighborhood residents are aware of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Organization, demonstrating that WHO carries a noticeable presence throughout the neighborhood (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Respondants who are aware of WHO



Woodland Heights residents are also extremely interested in participating in more neighborhood-wide activities (Figure 9):

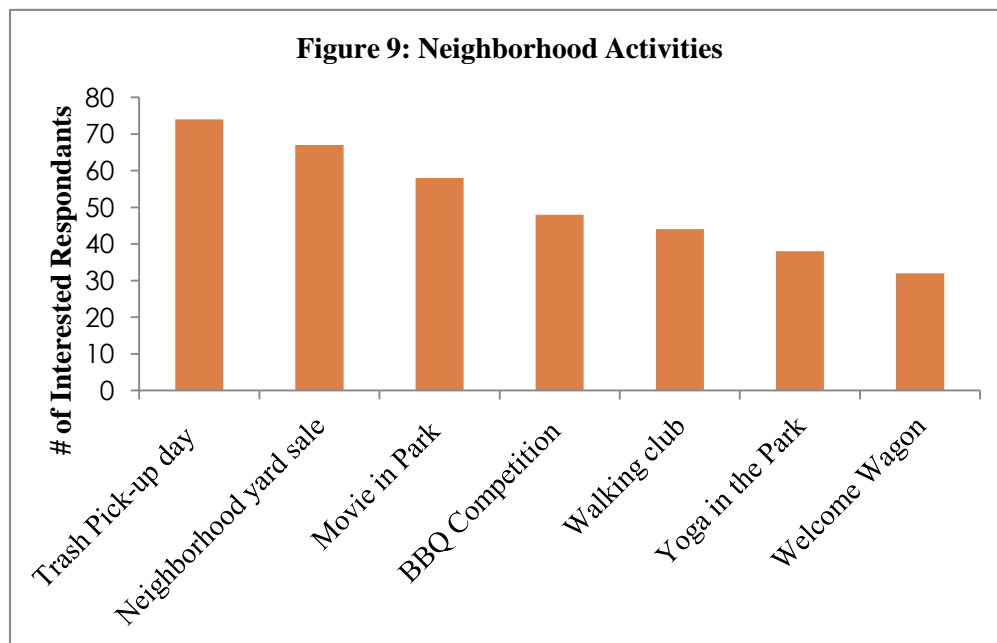
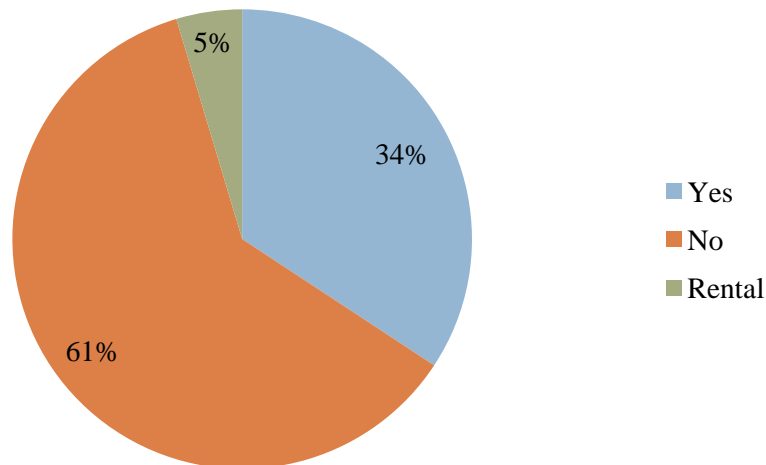


Figure 10 indicates that residents are most interested in participating in trash pick-up days and holding a neighborhood yard sale. Both activities support the previous results in this survey demonstrating a desire for a cleaner neighborhood and a stronger sense of community. Some of the “other” answers include a breakfast/coffee club and a block party.

APPENDIX A

WHO asked survey participants if they would be interested in receiving a free tree for their yard, and more than 1/3 of the residents surveyed answered that they would like a tree in their yard (Figure 10). It is clear that Woodland Heights residents desire a forest-like urban setting:

Figure 10: Free Tree for Your Yard?



The survey results presented in this document indicate that, overall, residents are pleased with living in Woodland Heights. However there are many concerns that must be addressed. Some of these concerns, including organizational outreach, will be led by the Woodland Heights Organization itself. Others, such as sidewalk improvements and addressing vacant properties, will be directed by the city and other organizations.

Again, it is important to note that the results of this survey will be implemented throughout the 2012 Woodland Heights neighborhood plan. These results allowed the visioning workshops to focus more on identifying goals that the community can reach, and creating realistic strategies that Woodland Heights may use to reach the goals. The final neighborhood plan will focus on goals and strategies, which are developed from this survey data, as well as the visioning workshop process

APPENDIX B

TREE RESOURCES

Forestry Division City of Des Moines

<http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Forestry.aspx>

The Forestry Division for the City of Des Moines' mission is to maintain a healthy urban forest by providing expert maintenance for the trees found in the right-of-way (ROW) and other trees located throughout City-owned cemeteries, golf courses, and parks. The City of Des Moines offers residents the opportunity to have a tree planted on the space near the street (in the right-of-way) at no charge.

Champion Tree Program

<http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Forestry.aspx>

The Champion Tree program is designed to recognize large/healthy trees growing on private and public property in the City of Des Moines.

Iowa Forestry Extension

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/forestry/links/contacts.html>

Contact information for public and private agencies and groups which provide forestry assistance.

Iowa DNR

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/Forestry/UrbanForestry/ResidentialTreePrograms.aspx>

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry's Mission is to help Iowans to expand and care for Iowa's over 3 million acres of trees and forests. The Bureau utilizes professionally trained foresters and natural resource technicians to provide forestry assistance to private landowners; to sustainably manage our state forests; to operate state forest nurseries at costs of production; and to protect, utilize and enhance our forest for today and tomorrow.

The Iowa Community Tree Steward Program

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/forestry/education/treesteward.html>

The Iowa Community Tree Steward Program offers 24 hours of hands-on training in community tree management. The goal of this program is to develop a network of highly motivated, well-trained volunteers to expand and improve urban and community forests in Iowa.

APPENDIX B

The Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/Forestry/UrbanForestry/UrbanForestryCouncil.aspx>

The Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council (IUCFC) is a volunteer council that works to advance the conservation and maintenance of urban forests throughout Iowa. The Council provides assistance and advice to the state's Urban and Community Forestry Program, administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). They work in partnership with all sectors to address local urban forestry issues by bringing together professionals, academics, government, industry, volunteers and the general public.

Trees Forever

<http://www.treesforever.org/>

Trees Forever is a non-profit organization that connects people to the environment through the planting and care of trees, prairie, and other natural areas. Their mission is "To plant and care for trees and the environment by empowering people, building community, and promoting stewardship."

Iowa Arborist Association (IAA)

http://www.iowaarboristassociation.org/About_Us/board-members.html

The purpose of the IAA is to foster an appreciation for the Iowa tree community, to increase interest in planting and caring for shade and ornamental trees, to promote the science and practice of professional arboriculture and to encourage public education.

The Grove <http://thegrove.americangrove.org/group/iowagrove/page/grants-and-funding-opportunities#.UJK1x1EsGGc>

This page provides a list of grants and funding opportunities for Iowa communities, schools and groups particularly interested in tree-planting projects.

Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa <http://conservationcorps.org/>

The Conservation Corps provides meaningful work for young people in conserving energy, managing natural resources, responding to disasters and leading volunteers. They work in partnership with NGOs, state and local governments and volunteer groups.

MidAmerican Energy http://www.midamericanenergy.com/ee/ia_res_trees.aspx

MidAmerican Energy offers an opportunity to apply for grants to plant trees.

APPENDIX B

HOUSING RESOURCES

Neighborhood Finance Corporation www.neighborhoodfinance.org

NFC provides unique lending programs and other services to facilitate neighborhood revitalization in Polk County, Iowa through partnerships with residents, governments, community based organizations and the business community.

Des Moines Area Association of REALTORS <http://www.dmaar.com/>

See Iowa Homes.com http://www.seeiowahomes.com/Des_Moines_IA_Real_Estate.aspx

Neighborhood Inspection Division

<http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Pages/NeighborhoodInspections.aspx>

This Division has three primary responsibilities: rental inspections, the oversight of condemned buildings, and the abatement of junk and debris, which includes junk vehicles.

Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines <http://www.rebuildingdm.org>

Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines brings together volunteers to improve the homes and lives of low-income homeowners through the generosity of volunteers and sponsors who are committed to keeping our city and its neighborhoods strong.

Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity <http://www.gdmhabitat.org/>

PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Friends of Des Moines Parks <http://www.friendsofdmparks.org/>

First established as a group of citizens in 1993, it is working to become a primary advocate and information resource for parks, greenways and recreational programming in the City of Des Moines.

Cemetery Stewards Program

<http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/Pages/Cemeteries.aspx>

Cemetery Stewards is a program where volunteers are able to enjoy the peace and serenity of historic cemeteries while maintaining and preserving monuments and plots. Volunteers pick up litter, trim around monuments, cut back dead flowers, and monitor for holes, sunken grave stones and vandalism. The program is currently implemented in three Des Moines cemeteries: Elm Grove, Glendale and Laurel Hill.

APPENDIX B

Des Moines Bicycle Collective <http://dsmbikecollective.org/mapcentral>

The Des Moines Bicycle Collective promotes bicycling as a means of active transportation, wellness, and recreation in Central Iowa

INFRASTRUCTURE

Special Assessment Subsidy Program

<http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Engineering/Pages/SpecialAssessments.aspx>

The Special Assessment Subsidy Program is a program adopted by the City Council to assist low and moderate income home owners in paying assessments in conjunction with construction of new public improvements such as sanitary sewers, storm sewers, sidewalks, curb construction, and street paving. The Subsidy Program also covers the repair of sidewalks.

APPENDIX C

Woodland Heights Character Plan

APPROVAL OF THE
WOODLAND HEIGHTS
STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

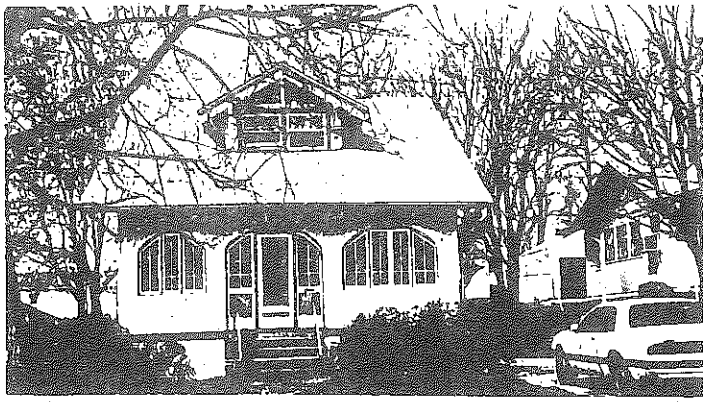
Woodland Heights Organization
February 18, 2013

Neighborhood Revitalization Board
March 6, 2013

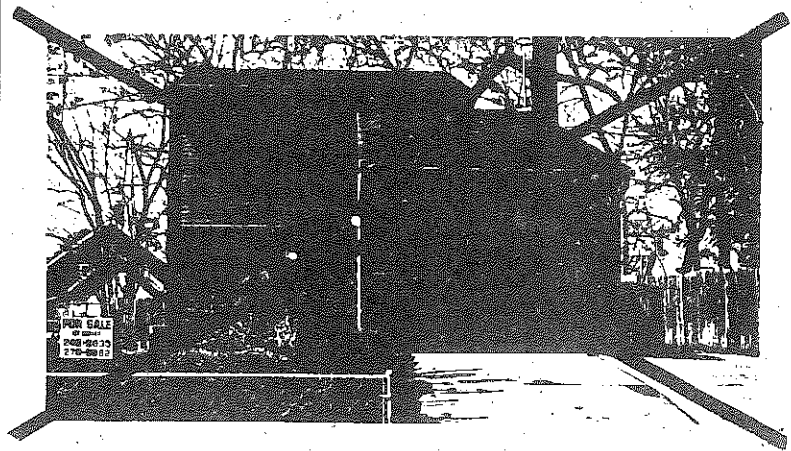
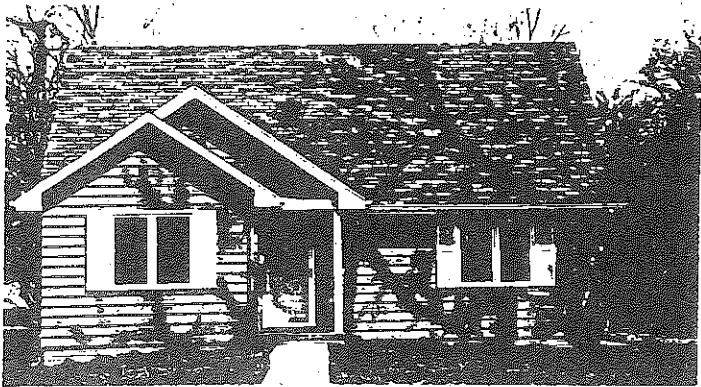
Des Moines Plan & Zoning Commission
March 7, 2013

Des Moines City Council
March 25, 2013

Polk County Board of Supervisors
March 26, 2013

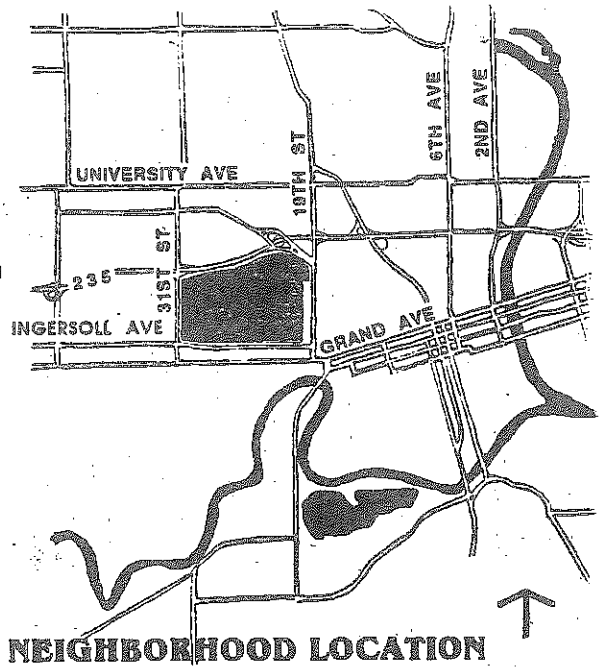


— ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION IN WOODLAND HEIGHTS —

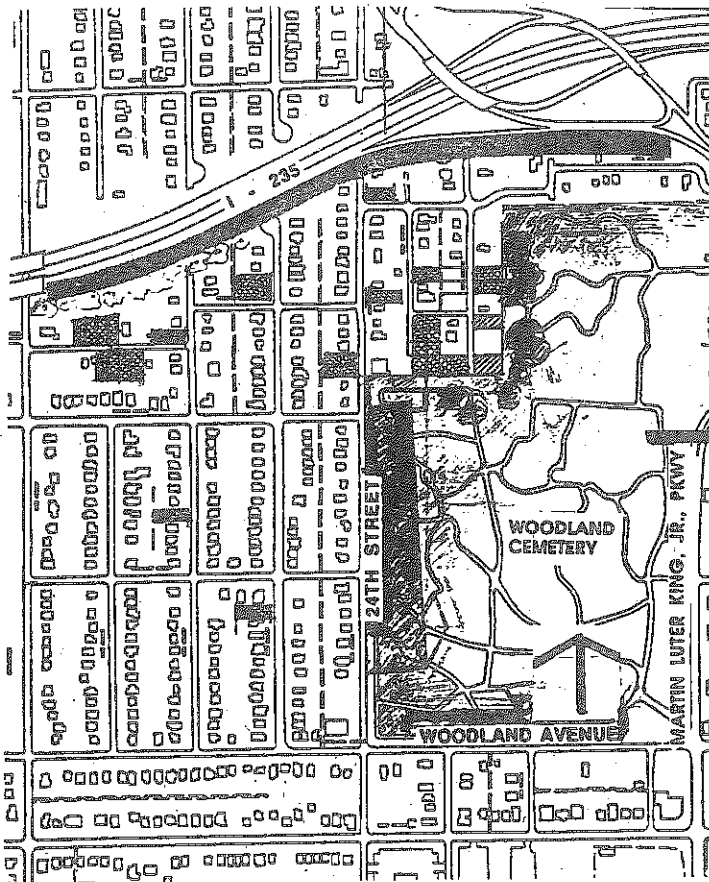


The WOODLAND HEIGHTS neighborhood in the city of Des Moines, Iowa is situated in an area near the western edge of the Central Business District, and is made up of nearly 48 blocks. Its boundaries are formed by the MacVicar Freeway (I-235) on the North, Ingersoll Avenue on the South, Martin Luther King, Jr., Parkway on the East, and 31st Street on the West. This access provides the neighborhood residents with an unique and convenient location in the vicinity of many commercial, educational and social facilities. Furthermore, the area is serviced by two bus routes that provide transportation to various destinations throughout the city. Mature trees and historically rich homes create the unique character of the neighborhood.

WOODLAND HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD



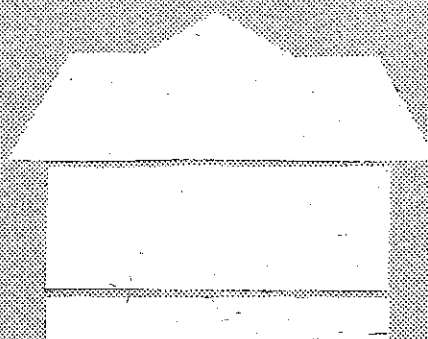
INFILL HOUSING AREA



The Woodland Heights neighborhood was established in the early 1900's. During that era, most of the homes were built with emphasis on "craftsman" and "Prairie Design" features of home design style. Although many homes in Woodland Heights retain their historical integrity, recent internal and external pressures have changed the neighborhood's early 20th century character. In 1990, the Woodland Heights neighborhood was selected for participation in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The preservation of the neighborhood architectural pattern became one of the main goals of the action plan.

I. MASSING

1. HEIGHT
2. ROOF FORM
3. FOUNDATION



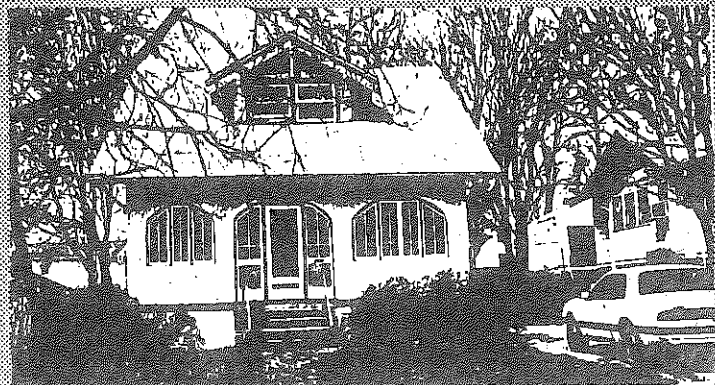
II. COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

1. PORCHES AND DECKS
2. DOORS AND WINDOWS
3. SIDING AND ROOF MATERIALS



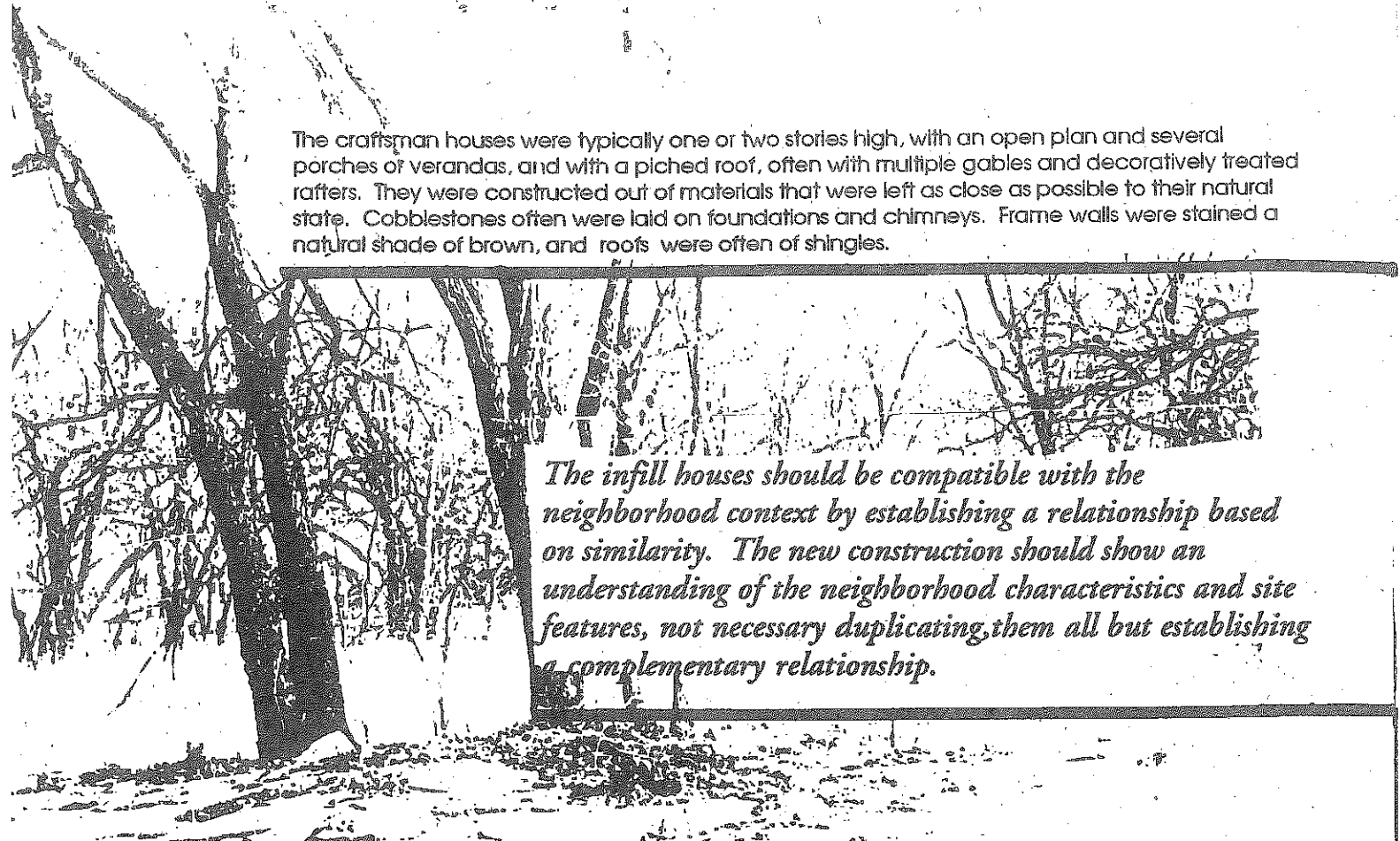
III. SITE RELATIONSHIPS

1. STREET RHYTHM
2. THE FRONT
3. LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS



The Art and Crafts movement was developed at the beginning of the 20th century with the growing interest in nature and "natural living". The movement was founded on the principles of honesty, simplicity, and beauty. The new form of life-style materialized in the architectural craftsman style, which shortly became the quintessential American house style of the early twentieth century. There were few American suburbs or streets that did not have the craftsman use.

The craftsman houses were typically one or two stories high, with an open plan and several porches or verandas, and with a pitched roof, often with multiple gables and decoratively treated rafters. They were constructed out of materials that were left as close as possible to their natural state. Cobblestones often were laid on foundations and chimneys. Frame walls were stained a natural shade of brown, and roofs were often of shingles.

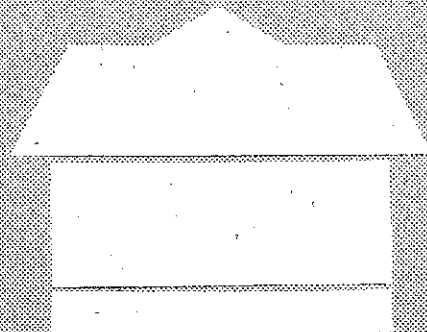


The infill houses should be compatible with the neighborhood context by establishing a relationship based on similarity. The new construction should show an understanding of the neighborhood characteristics and site features, not necessary duplicating them all but establishing a complementary relationship.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide design direction for any new residential development in the Woodland Heights neighborhood. The goal is to preserve the neighborhood identity and enhance its attractiveness and livability. The neighborhood will benefit additionally in a long term appreciation of real estate, associated with character and design integrity. Design guidelines are the basis for evaluation and discussion during local review sessions. Addressing these guidelines is required by the Neighborhood Finance Corporation and public financing.

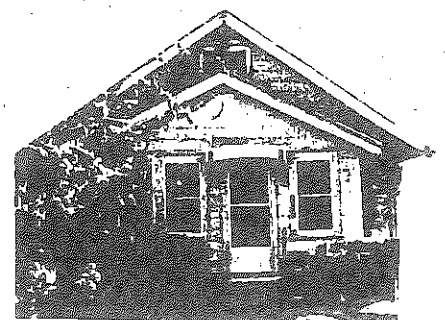
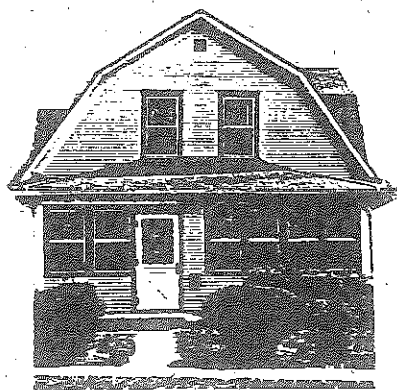
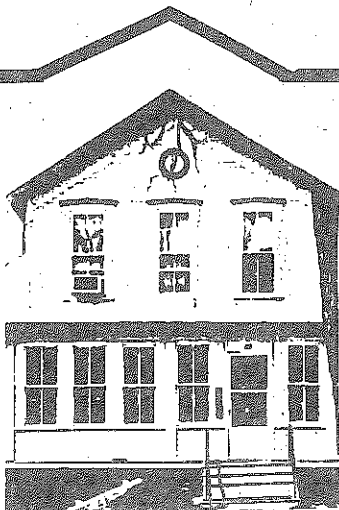
I. MASSING

1. HEIGHT
2. ROOF FORM
3. FOUNDATION



1. HEIGHT

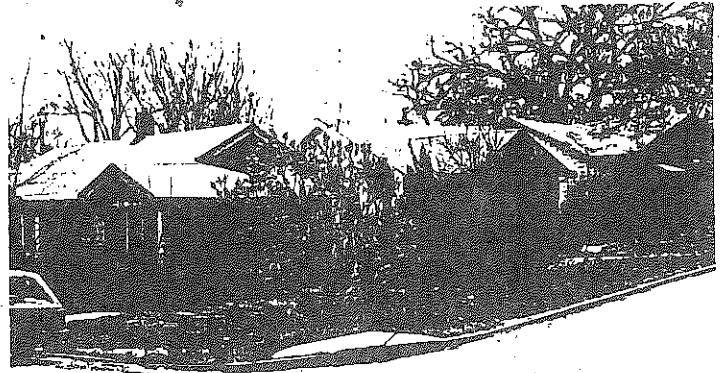
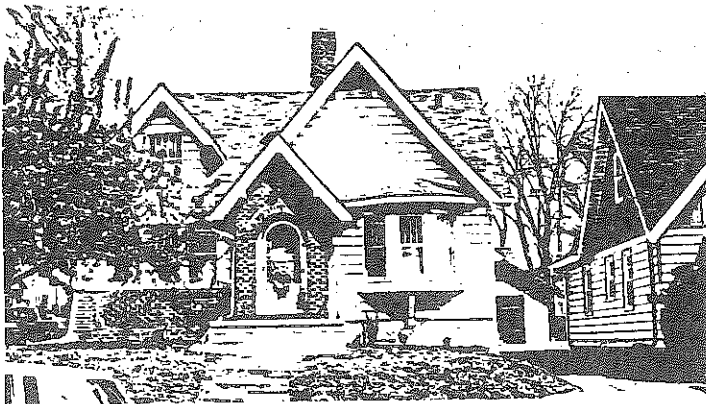
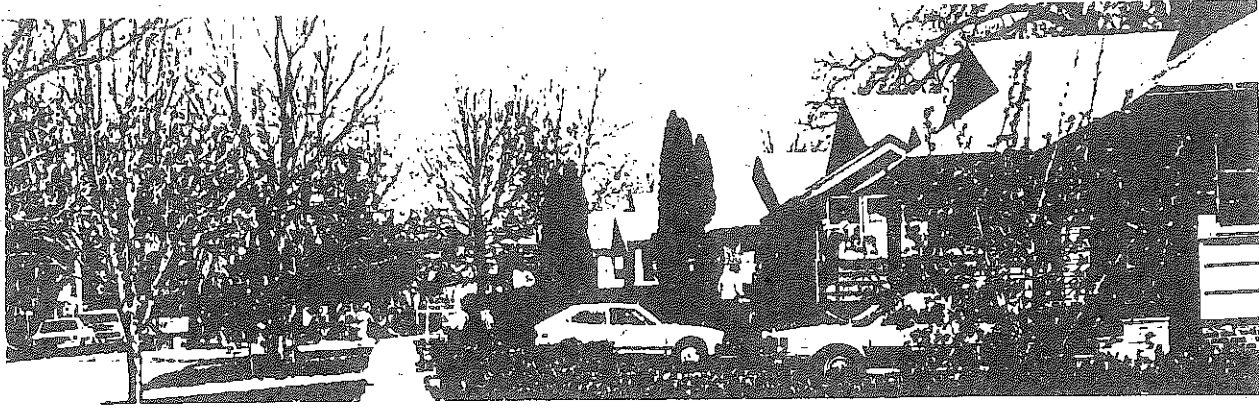
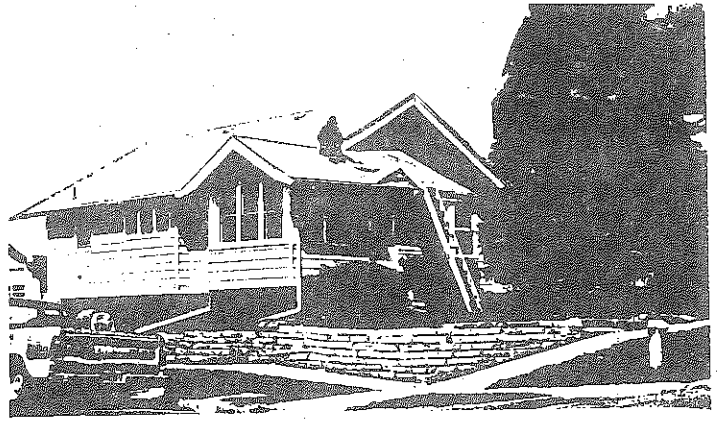
The height of new construction should be similar to the height of original, residential buildings in the block, and in the whole neighborhood.



2. ROOF FORM

Roof shape and pitch should be similar to or in some way recall, the roof forms found in the neighborhood.

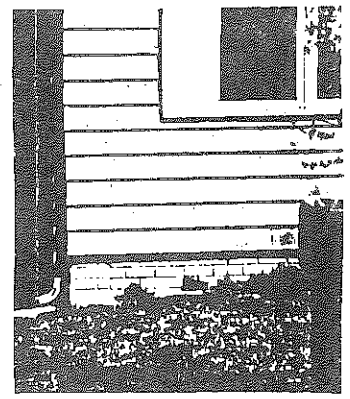
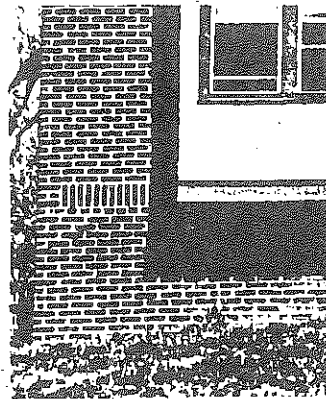
Wood shingles should be used on the new construction. Asphalt or fiberglass shingles in a medium or dark color may be an acceptable substitute.



3. FOUNDATIONS

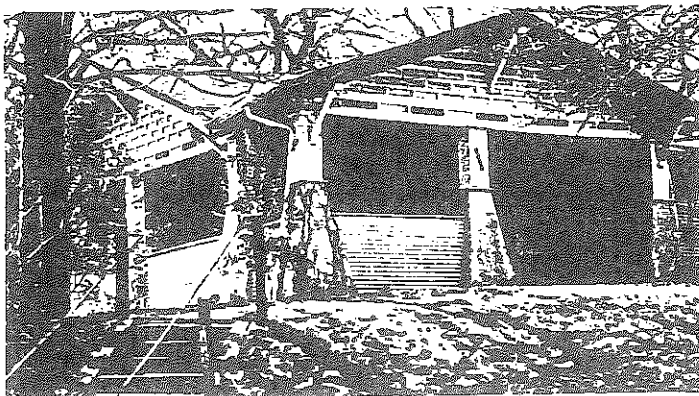
The foundations should be exposed depending on the site characteristics and architectural style.

The amount of exposed foundation and openings in the foundations should be similar in size to the original buildings of the same style in the neighborhood.



II. COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

1. PORCHES AND DECKS
2. DOORS AND WINDOWS
3. SIDING AND ROOF MATERIALS

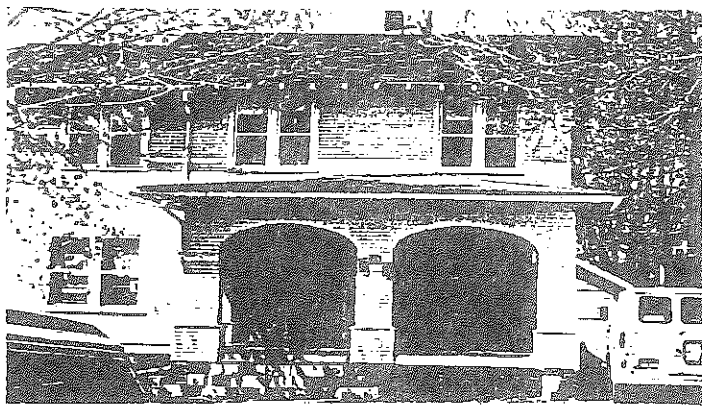


1. PORCHES AND DECKS

Porches should have proportions similar to the original porches in the neighborhood.

Materials used to construct the new porches should be compatible with porches of surrounding buildings.

Porches should have a connection to the interior by the use of windows and doors.



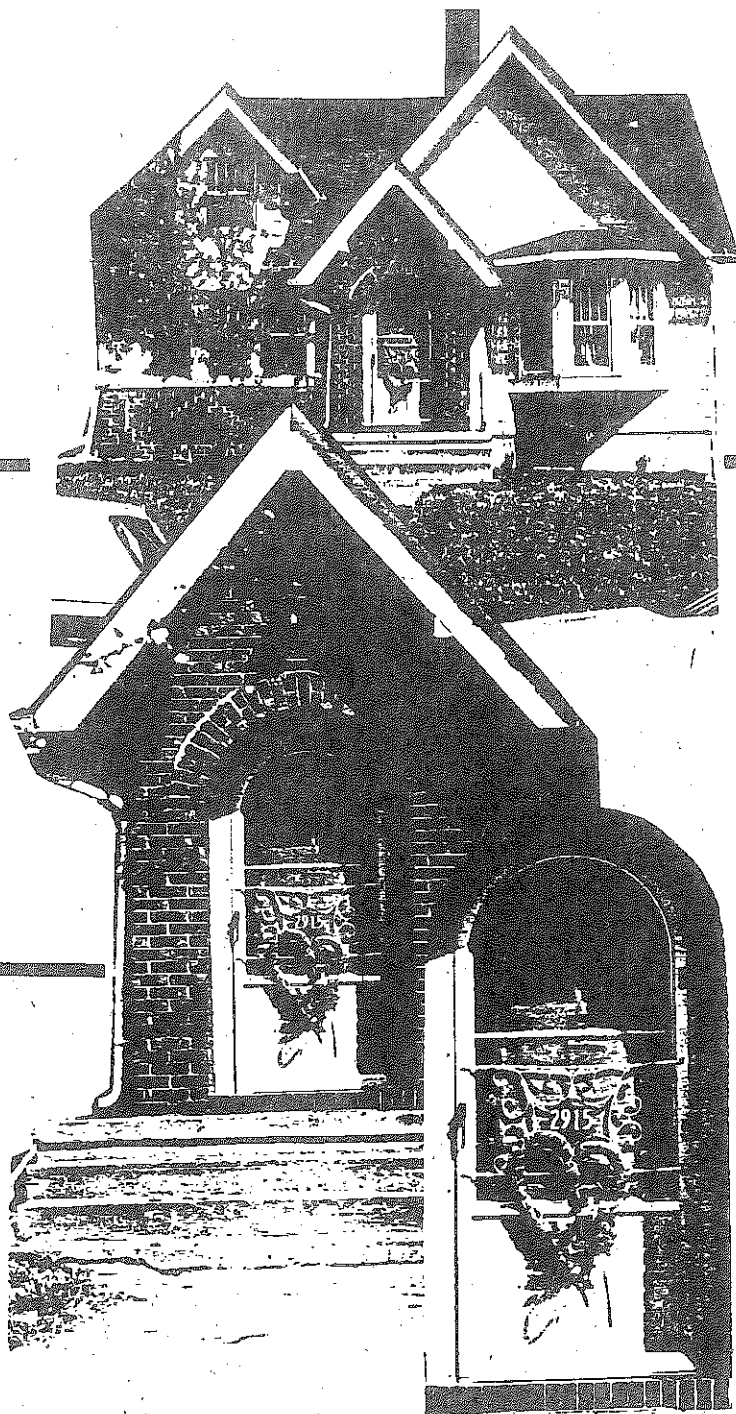
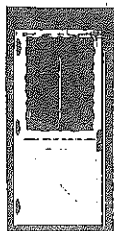
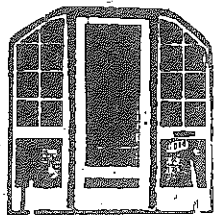
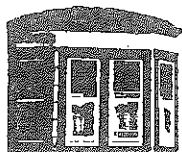
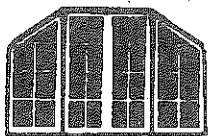
2. DOORS AND WINDOWS

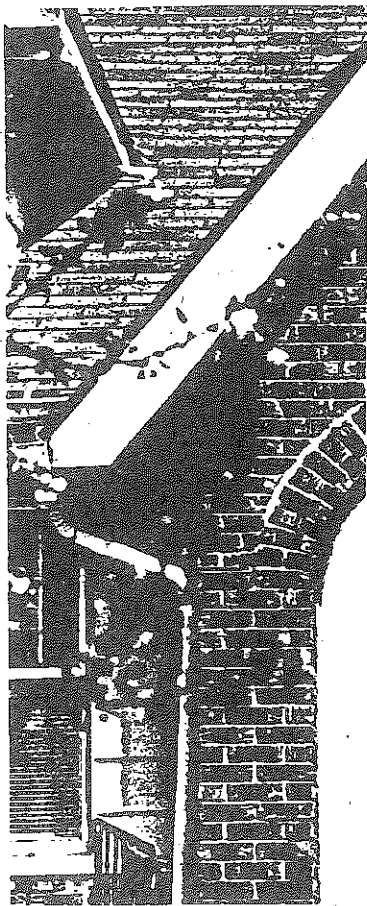
The rhythm, the size and the shape of the windows should be repeated from similar buildings in the neighborhood.

Two car garages should have two single doors rather than one large door to avoid a strong horizontal orientation.

Large areas of solid blank walls should not be created on visible elevations.

The windows' and doors' decorative features should be similar to the original elements in the neighborhood or have a similar level of visual enhancement.



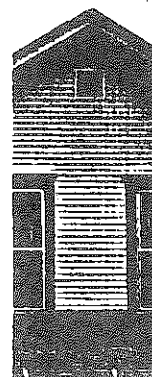


3. SIDING AND ROOF MATERIALS (type, size, texture, color)

To ensure compatibility with adjacent properties new construction should continue the material palette of the original buildings in type, size, and color.

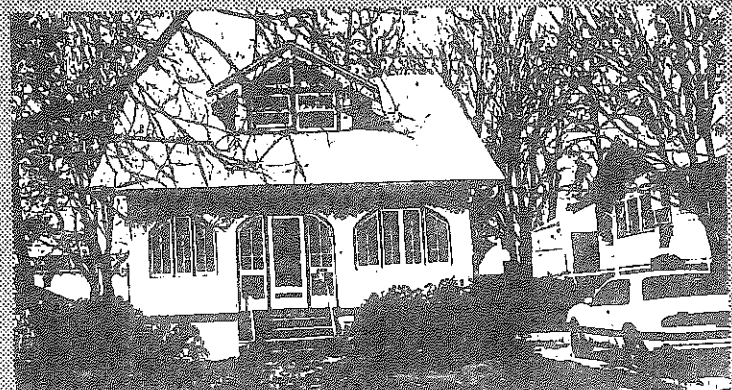
Substitute contemporary materials can be used if they have an appropriate size, texture, and color.

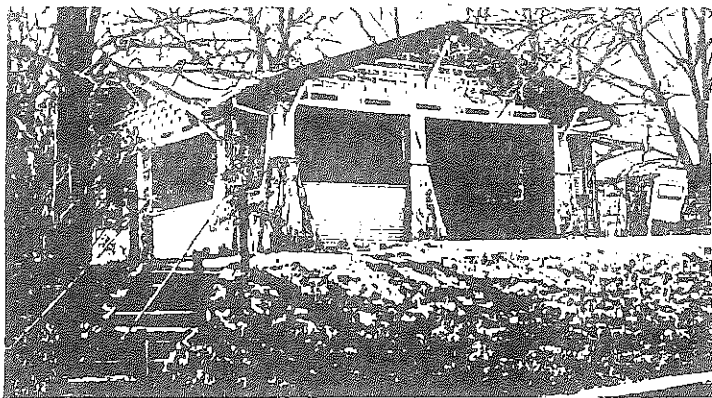
Color selection should be based on architectural design. Colors associated with the "craftsman" era should be considered - generally earth tones.



III. SITE RELATIONSHIPS

1. STREET RHYTHM
2. THE FRONT
3. LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS





1. STREET RHYTHM

The size of the building front and the spacing between buildings on a block should relate to the existing rhythm on a block facade.

New houses should be located at the minimum setback line, with emphasis on major facades and main entrances facing the street front.

Houses on corner lots should be designed with emphasis on both sides of the structure, facing both street fronts.

Monotonous facades which break the street rhythm will not add to the valuation of the neighborhood.



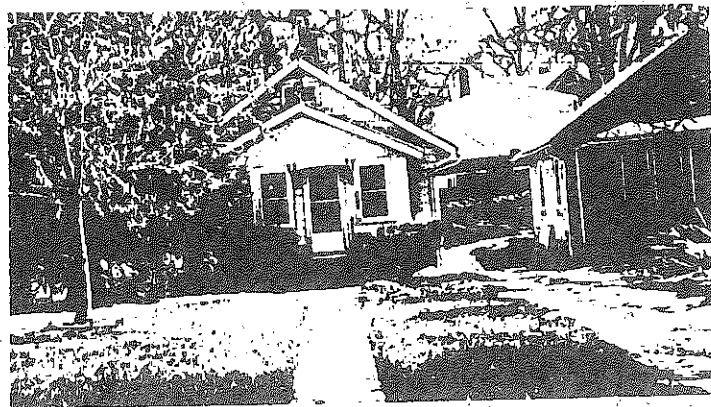
2. THE FRONT

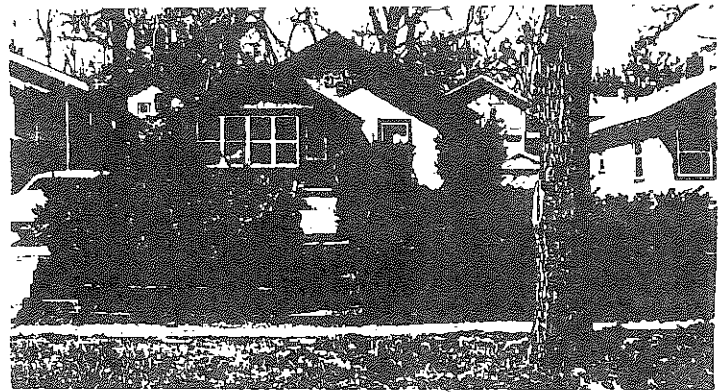
New buildings should typically face the street.

New entry levels should match the height of the entry levels of adjacent buildings.

The entrances should be linked to the street by the pattern similar to the existing links.

Front porches, steps, emphasis at window and door areas and other decorative features should be used in a simple contemporary version of the neighborhood pattern.



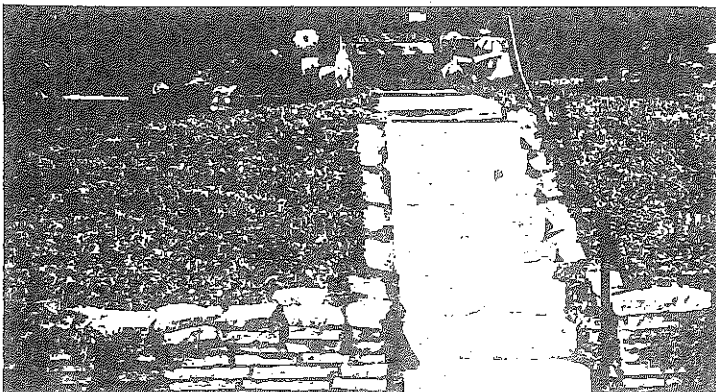


3. LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

The front yard space of the residential property should be developed as an attractive open space by using a substantial number of trees and plants, in addition to special paving, appropriate lighting, and other landscape features.

Fences and retaining walls should be consistent in materials and quality to what is most typical in the neighborhood and relate to the house structure and the adjacent properties.

Existing trees and other plants should be preserved on new development



DES MOINES PLANNING DEPARTMENT — NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DEVISION



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DES MOINES PLANNING DEPARTMENT